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# THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY

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It is surely unnecessary to state in terms that the publication of a given article in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY does not commit the editors to the views maintained in the article. Any serious effort from any quarter to advance the general causes which THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY espouses—some of which may be named, e. g. the determination of the aim(s) and purpose(s) of the study of the Classics, the kind(s) of profit that ought to be realizable from such study, and the best method(s) of appropriating such profit—will be certain of a welcome. So too will any review of a book which, whatever the reviewer's estimate of the book in question may be, shall seem free from animus or bias.

Having said this by way of preface, I turn for a moment to Mr. Bradley's article, entitled A Program of Reform, which appeared in the opening number of the current volume. I was much interested in this paper when I heard it read last April at the meeting of The Classical Association of the Atlantic States. The impression which it made upon me then can best be described by a slight modification of words which Mr. Bradley himself used last year in a review of a certain book: "This is a . . . good book on . . . bad principles". Since the completed paper came into my hands a few days ago many occupations have prevented me from thinking out carefully, as I hope sometime to do, Mr. Bradley's Articles of Faith. But a double reading of the proofs of the paper leaves me where I was last April; without being able as yet exactly to formulate in all details the grounds of my objections, I still feel that there is a flaw somewhere in these articles.

When I turn to Mr. Bradley's discussion of the way in which he would have the work of teaching beginners in Latin done in the class-room, I find very much to commend. When he urges strongly that without thorough drill in the language, without the acquisition of a certain knowledge and control of the fundamentals of the language, no real progress is possible, and that in particular progress in aesthetic appreciation of the literature is a mere dream, he is on impregnable ground. To be sure the positions taken here are by no means new, but none the less they need to be stated over and over again lest they be overlooked by reason of their very obviousness. One does not hear (at least I myself do not hear) at present

as much uninformed, vague, foolish talk about the literary study of the Classics as one heard some ten or more years ago. But one still hears that sort of talk. Many people seem never to have dreamed that a course devoted outright to Latin or Greek syntax alone can, in the hands of some teachers at least, be made a wondrous means of furthering the literary study of Latin and Greek.

Hence Mr. Bradley's insistence on the point under discussion deserves our gratitude. Furthermore, if I understand him rightly, many of his proposals of means and methods for aiding the beginner toward this indispensable knowledge of the language seem to me not only good in themselves, but to breathe the very essence of the principles which underlie the action taken by The Classical Association of the Atlantic States at Washington in April, 1908. I have in mind the resolutions passed by the Association as embodying its programme of reform in the teaching of elementary language, a programme, which, to my mind, was far in advance of the compromise adopted at Cleveland in October, 1909, and put forth as the Report of the Commission on College Entrance Requirements in Latin (see THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 3,98-100). In my opinion, profoundly important as the Report of the Commission was, in that for the first time there was intelligent and cordial co-operation of the East and the West in the consideration of problems of Latin study and teaching, it left the main problem—the actual teaching of preparatory Latin—largely unsolved. To that problem Mr. Bradley contributes something. What he says of *intensive* study in his programme we can all applaud. In what he says of *extensive* study of Latin there is little, if anything, to which one will take exception, aside from his strong advocacy of the study of large portions of Latin literature in English translations as a *supplement to careful study of the language itself* and of limited portions of the literature in the original. On this point I have little practical experience; that little has been rather in support of Mr. Bradley's contentions. Some important points must be noted here. It is one thing to have translations of the Classics studied by those who know no Greek or Latin as their sole means of making acquaintance with the Classics; with work of that sort done by classical departments I have small patience. It is a

very different thing to have translations used as subsidiary to such an elaborate amount of detailed study of the language itself as Mr. Bradley advocates. As Mr. Bradley says, we teachers of Greek and Latin should ourselves constitute the Department of Classical Languages and Literature (if we are ourselves competent really to constitute that department we have great reason to cry *Dis deabusque omnibus gratias maximas et agimus et semper agemus*. Of one thing at least I am positive; no one save the direct students of Latin and Greek is competent to constitute that department). Again, Mr. Bradley's proposals for the extensive study of Latin and Greek involve devoting most of the hours for extensive work to the most intensive sort of intensive study, an intensive study which will force the student to stand on his own feet, if anything ever will, and will pitilessly expose his ignorance, if ignorant he is, even to his teacher.

Again, the careful following of such a programme of work as Mr. Bradley outlines would go far, in my opinion, to meet and nullify some objections which have been urged to the proposal to lay increased emphasis on examinations in the translation of Latin at sight as the road to admission to college. I feel very strongly that the teacher who succeeds in imparting from the outset a real knowledge of the language will have no difficulty in carrying that student through not only as much Latin as has heretofore been prescribed for admission, but much more. The difficulty has never been in the quantity *per se*.

I was interested also in the coyness, if I may use the word, of Mr. Bradley's reference to the oral use of Latin in the preparatory work. The danger that a mere term will be regarded by some as an infallible panacea for all discovered and discoverable ills is always present; in this connection it is present, I think, in more than ordinary degree. We need a clearcut presentation of what is really meant by the oral method, at least of what is meant by those who have recently been using the term, and an equally clearcut indication of the extent to which the method, clearly delimited, is practicable for the average teacher in the preparatory school.

Here, then, at the very outset of a new volume of THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY we have set before us many, if not all, of the problems with which we have to deal. The editors will be glad to have the thoughts of the readers of THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY on these topics.

C. K.

#### BYWAYS OF ROMAN VERSE<sup>1</sup>

The great body of Latin versifiers, known and unknown, grouped together as *Poetae Latini Minores* by no means deserve the almost complete oblivion

into which they have been allowed to sink. The Minor Poets are worth reading; for among much that is commonplace, trashy or obscene, they have left to us some really beautiful poetry, and, beside this, a wonderful record in verse of their daily life, their loves and their hates, their labor and their play. Even the commonplace among this mass of verse is of value, not for the literary impressions conveyed, but for what is told of the life, the thought, the gossip of the day. These trifles of the day we do not get in the prose writings. The prose of the Romans was usually serious or at least sustained work; but the impressions of the moment were all given in verse. For as the centuries wore on after the Christian Era and Rome entered upon the period of her decline, Rome became a nation of versifiers. An overwhelming proportion of verse to prose marks the decline as well as the rise of a literature.

Among these Minor Poets the entire gamut of excellence is run. As Petronius says:

Each what each shall wish may find: there's nothing existing  
Pleasing to all; one thorns, one the sweet roses  
doth cull.

It may, I hope, be of interest to stroll through these byways of verse in search of what is good, curious or amusing. And one word as to the form in which I shall offer my selections. I shall attempt to translate them into the same metrical forms as the originals. I am aware that this is regarded in highly authoritative quarters as rash, not to say rank, heresy. We are met with much objection about the genius of the language and other intangibilities of criticism. Alien verse forms *can* be grafted upon a language, as witness the entire body of Latin verse itself. I have long had a lurking belief that in order truthfully and accurately to convey the effect of Latin and Greek poetry in translation, the translation should be made in the metre of the original; and when we find so acute a critic as Mr. Churton Collins expressing a decided leaning to this opinion, it is, I think, pardonable to attempt such rendering; though I must crave indulgence for rushing in where, so to speak, angels have feared to tread.

Let us begin with the Emperors themselves. It is an imperial banquet of Augustus. The guests, chosen friends of the founder of an empire and patron of the arts, recline about the regal board. The scent of roses is heavy upon the air. The guests await the signal from the royal host. Augustus speaks:

Guests of mine, all corroding cares tonight will  
you banish?

Let not a clouded heart shadow this snow-white  
hour.

<sup>1</sup> This paper was read at the Fourth Annual Meeting of The Classical Association of the Atlantic States, New York City, April 23, 1910.